

## SECTION 1: OUTCOMES

### I. SAFETY

#### Safety Outcome 1

<b>Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Jackson County</b>	<b>Jasper County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	16	11	10	37	78.7
Partially Achieved:	5	1	0	6	12.8
Not Achieved or Addressed:	3	0	1	4	8.5
Not Applicable:	0	0	3		
<b>Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards:</b>					
	<b>National Standard (Percentage)</b>	<b>State's Percentage</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Standard</b>	
Repeat maltreatment	6.1 or less	7.3		X	
Maltreatment of children in foster care	0.57 or less	0.62		X	

#### STATUS OF SAFETY OUTCOME 1

Missouri did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 78.7 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.
- The State did not meet the national standard for (1) the percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period or (2) the percentage of children experiencing maltreatment by a foster care provider.

Performance on this outcome varied across CFSR sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 92 percent of Jasper County cases and 91 percent of St. Louis County cases, compared to 67 percent of Jackson County cases.

A key CFSR finding is that CD is not consistent with regard to initiating investigations of child maltreatment reports or establishing face-to-face contact with the child subject of the report in accordance with the State-established timeframes. In addition, both the

State Data Profile and case reviews indicate that CD is not effective in preventing the recurrence of child maltreatment within a 6-month period. Repeat maltreatment within a 6-month period occurred in 8 (53%) of the 15 cases in which there was at least 1 substantiated maltreatment report during the period under review. Six of these cases were in Jackson County.

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 are presented below.

### **Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      X Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 18 of the 50 cases. Thirty-two cases were not applicable because they did not have reports of child maltreatment during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency requirements. CD requires that investigations and assessments be initiated within 24 hours of receipt unless the report is identified as educational neglect. Every child victim must be seen face-to-face within 24 hours of receipt of the report and every child in the household must be seen face-to-face within 72 hours. This assessment resulted in the following findings:

- Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 12 (67%) of the 18 applicable cases (5 of the 12 cases were foster care cases).
- Item 1 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 6 (33%) of the 18 applicable cases (3 of the 6 cases were foster care cases).

Ratings for item 1 varied across CFSR sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Jasper County cases, compared to 61 percent of Jackson County cases and 50 percent of St. Louis County cases. However, there were only two applicable cases in St. Louis County and three in Jasper County. The majority of the applicable cases were in Jackson County.

Item 1 was rated as a Strength when face-to-face contact was established with the child within the required timeframe (24 hours). The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when face-to-face contact was not established within the required timeframe. Of the 6 cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement for this item, delays in meeting the 24-hour time frame ranged from 2 days to almost 1 month.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed concern about the agency's efforts to respond to maltreatment reports in a timely manner. Some of the barriers identified to timely investigations were insufficient training for new investigative staff and supervisors who do not have experience with investigations. Several stakeholders reported that a new State law (HB613) that prevents child welfare agency staff from seeing children in school has had a negative impact on the worker's ability to

establish face-to-face contact with the child in a timely manner. Stakeholders also noted that sometimes there are delays in responding to reports received after business hours or on weekends.

Several stakeholders reported that calls are given specific letter designations based on the State's classification system and that worker's responses to these calls often are influenced by the letter designation. They noted, for example, that reports received from mandated reporters that are not considered to involve maltreatment are classified as M Reports and sent forward for investigation because they come from mandated reporters. Stakeholders expressed the opinion that agency children's service workers often do not respond to these reports within the required timeframe because they perceive M Reports as not involving maltreatment and therefore as requiring minimal attention. Stakeholders indicated that children's service workers do not take these reports seriously. Stakeholders also expressed concern about the agency response to maltreatment reports classified as N Reports (reports of maltreatment by non-caretakers) and P Reports (reports that do not require a formal assessment or investigation).

Despite these concerns, State-level stakeholders reported that the use of Structured Decision Making has resulted in significant improvements in the functioning of the Hotline and the ability of the Hotline to assess the risk involved in maltreatment reports. Stakeholders noted that reports are sent on either for an investigation or a family assessment, depending on the determination of risk.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the finding that in 33 percent of the applicable cases, CD had not established face-to-face contact with the child subject of a maltreatment report in accordance with the State's required timeframes.

According to the Statewide Assessment, all abuse and neglect hotline reports are made to Missouri's Central Statewide Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline Unit, also known as the Central Registry Unit. Once screened and classified, they are transmitted by telephone or computer to the appropriate county Children's Division office for appropriate action. Missouri's centralized Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline received 103,000 calls last year; 54 percent of these were child abuse or neglect reports, 29 percent were referrals for services, and 17 percent were screened out because they did not meet criteria for a report. The Hotline operates continuously 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Some of the Hotline personnel hired at the Central Registry Unit are experienced field staff and have completed all basic training modules required for staff. Other Hotline personnel receive 8 days of pre-service training. In addition, they have the opportunity to shadow an investigator to familiarize them with the investigation process.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Missouri has a statewide flexible response child protection system. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, this delivery approach is designed to focus investigation efforts on reports that would involve a violation of law if they were substantiated. Reports are screened to determine whether they meet the criteria for an investigation or for the family assessment track. If a report meets the criteria for an investigation, CD co-investigates with law enforcement. If the report does not meet the

criteria for investigation, the family is provided with a comprehensive Family Assessment in order to address service needs. The Statewide Assessment also notes that Missouri uses regional Child Assessment Centers in many parts of the State to coordinate the sexual and physical abuse investigation process. The goals of the Child Assessment Centers are to reduce the emotional trauma of the investigation to the child, improve the ability of investigators to reach an appropriate finding, and improve multi-disciplinary collaboration at the community level.

## **Item 2. Repeat maltreatment**

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 47 of the 50 cases. Three cases were not applicable because there was never a substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report on any of the children in the family. Two of these cases involved a “crisis newborn assessment,” which CD does not consider a maltreatment report. In the third case, the case was opened for services although none of the several maltreatment reports had been substantiated. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether there had ever been a substantiated report on the family. Reviewers also were to determine if there was at least one substantiated maltreatment report during the period under review, and if so, if another substantiated or indicated report occurred within 6 months of that report. The results of the assessment were the following:

- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 39 (83%) of the 47 applicable cases (23 of the 39 cases were foster care cases).
- Item 2 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 8 (17%) of the 47 applicable cases (3 of the 8 cases were foster care cases). Six of the eight cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement for this item were in Jackson County.

Item 2 was rated as a Strength under the following circumstances:

- There was a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report involving the family prior to the period under review, but no substantiated or indicated report during the period under review (32 cases).
- There was a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report involving the family during the period under review, but there was no substantiated or indicated report within 6 months of that report (7 cases).

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when a substantiated maltreatment report occurring during the period under review was within 6-months of another substantiated maltreatment report involving the same perpetrator and similar circumstances. Repeat maltreatment occurred in 8 (53%) of the 15 cases in which there was at least one substantiated maltreatment report during the period under review.

Additional findings with respect to the frequency of maltreatment reports (both substantiated and unsubstantiated) on the family prior to and during the period under review for all 50 cases were the following:

- In 3 cases, there was never a maltreatment report on the family.
- In 4 cases, there was 1 maltreatment report.
- In 20 cases, there were between 2 and 5 maltreatment reports.
- In 18 cases, there were between 6 and 10 maltreatment reports.
- In 5 cases, there were more than 10 maltreatment reports.

Although in 23 (46%) of the 50 cases reviewed there were more than 6 maltreatment reports on the family during the life of the case, it is not known how many of these reports were substantiated.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that maltreatment recurrence is a problem in the State. Stakeholders attributed repeat maltreatment to a variety of factors, including poverty, lack of funding for services, barriers to accessing services for children and families in in-home services cases, and chronic neglect. Stakeholders also expressed concern that children who are the subject of unsubstantiated reports are not receiving any services and are at risk for maltreatment. While Missouri statutes do not require families with unsubstantiated reports to accept services, Missouri CD does have policy regarding services for unsubstantiated cases. Case workers are to close cases unless the family requests services to improve family functioning and such services are available through the Division or community resources. For cases concluded as “unsubstantiated-preventive services indicated”, continued case opening and services are also voluntary for families. However, since the worker has identified indicators for potential abuse/neglect, families are encouraged to accept services and are informed regarding services available through the Division as well as community resources.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the following findings:

- In 17 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that at least 2 substantiated maltreatment reports occurred within a 6-month period; and
- The State's rate of maltreatment recurrence for 2002 (7.3%), as reported in the State Data Profile, does not meet the national standard of 6.1 percent or less.

According to the Statewide Assessment, CD recognizes the need for further evaluation and planning on the issue of repeat maltreatment. The Statewide Assessment notes that CD has not yet created procedures for examining cases of repeat maltreatment, identifying patterns of circumstances, or examining the relationship between cases open for services and the incidence of repeat maltreatment. The Statewide Assessment also notes that CD anticipates that the Structured Decision Making approach that the agency is implementing to conduct risk and safety assessments will result in a reduction in the maltreatment recurrence rate.

## Safety Outcome 2

<b>Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Jackson County</b>	<b>Jasper County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	13	12	10	35	70.0
Partially Achieved:	5	0	2	7	14.0
Not Achieved or Addressed:	6	0	2	8	16.0
Not Applicable:	0	0	0		

## STATUS OF SAFETY OUTCOME 2

Missouri did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was substantially achieved in 70.0 percent of the applicable cases reviewed, which does not meet the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity

Performance on this outcome varied across CFSR sites. The outcome was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Jasper County cases, compared to 71 percent of St. Louis County cases and 54 percent of Jackson County cases.

A key concern identified during the CFSR pertained to a lack of service provision. Case reviews found that although families were being assessed for service needs, in several cases, services were not provided to either the children or the parents, particularly in the in-home services cases.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

### Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal

\_\_\_\_\_ Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** There were 33 cases for which an assessment of item 3 was applicable. Cases were not applicable if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and/or there were no substantiated or indicated maltreatment reports or identified risks of harm to any children in the home during the period under review. For this item, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to

a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families to prevent removal of children from their homes while at the same time ensuring their safety. The results of this assessment were the following:

- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 25 (76%) of the 33 applicable cases (7 of these 25 cases were foster care cases).
- Item 3 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 8 (24%) of the 33 applicable cases (2 of these 8 cases were foster care cases)

Ratings for this item varied across CFSR sites. Six of the eight cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement were in Jackson County. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Jasper County cases, compared to 75 percent of St. Louis County cases and 68 percent of Jackson County cases.

Item 3 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- Appropriate services were provided to parents and children to prevent removal (18 cases).
- The family received appropriate post-reunification services to prevent re-entry into foster care (2 cases).
- The children were appropriately removed from the home to ensure their safety (5 cases).

Services provided to the families included, but were not limited to, individual and family counseling and therapy, homemaker services, parent aide services, domestic violence services, legal services, health and dental care services through Medicaid, intensive in-home services, parenting classes, anger management and behavioral control classes, case management, housing services, education-related services, mental health assessment and treatment services, substance abuse assessment and treatment services, mentors for children, referrals for Food Stamps and energy assistance, and referrals for assistance from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency did not provide services (6 cases) or that the services provided by the agency were insufficient to maintain the child safely in the home (2 cases). In three cases in which services were not provided there was a subsequent maltreatment report on the family.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that CD is consistent in assessing the family's service needs, but that the services necessary to meet those needs are not always available or accessible to families. Jackson County stakeholders also expressed concern that contract agencies providing case management for families must get authorization from the agency before referring children or parents for services and this causes delays in initiating services. Several stakeholders voiced concern that the agency and/or the court tends to leave children in their homes even when there are not sufficient services to address risk issues. Jackson County stakeholders reported that if parents do not admit to drug use and there is no actual proof, the court will not support the agency's request for substance abuse treatment or urinalysis unless the parent agrees voluntarily.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in 24 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that CD had not made diligent efforts to provide the services necessary to maintain children safely in their own homes.

According to the Statewide Assessment, CD has a number of in-home services available to children and families, including Family Centered Services, Intensive In-Home Services, Family Reunion Services, in-home counseling services, parent aide and other services through Children's Treatment Services. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, CD believes that the high quality of these services has contributed to the slight decline from 2001 to 2002 in the number of children entering foster care.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that the "System of Care" initiative, which is supported by the Governor and the legislature, has increased the level of cooperation among the child welfare, mental health, education, and court systems. The goal of this initiative is to divert children from the child welfare system who need mental health services but are not at risk of abuse or neglect from caretakers.

#### **Item 4. Risk of harm to child**

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

***Review Findings:*** An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 50 cases. In assessing item 4, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to reduce the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. This assessment resulted in the following findings:

- Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 36 (72%) of the 50 applicable cases (22 of the 36 cases were foster care cases).
- Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 14 (28%) of the 50 applicable cases (4 of the 14 cases were foster care cases).

Ratings for this item varied across CFSR sites. Ten of the 14 cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement for this item were in Jackson County. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Jasper County cases, compared to 71 percent of St. Louis County cases and 58 percent of Jackson County cases.

Item 4 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The risk of harm to children was appropriately managed by removing the children from the home either prior to or during the period under review and providing services to the parents (19 cases).



- The risk of harm to children was appropriately managed by removing the children from the home either prior to or during the period under review and seeking termination of parental rights (TPR) (2 cases).
- The risk of harm to children was appropriately managed by providing services to families to address risk concerns while the children remained in the home (14 cases).
- The risk of harm to children was appropriately managed by removing the perpetrator from the home (1 case).

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Either no services were provided or the services provided were not adequate to reduce risk of harm for all children in the family (12 cases).
- The agency did not monitor service participation or conduct a safety assessment before closing the case, thus risk of harm remained (1 case).
- There was insufficient assessment of risk of harm to a child in a foster home and risk issues were not addressed (1 case).

In many cases, reviewers identified serious problems in the family that the agency did not address but that had a high potential for contributing to risk of harm to children. These included, but were not limited to, sexual abuse perpetrated by a sibling, parental substance abuse (which was ongoing while children remained in the home), self-mutilation by an adolescent girl, evidence of physical injuries to a child, evidence of neglect, and a mother discontinuing a 6-year-old child's therapy for sexual abuse because the mother did not believe the child had been abused despite the child testing positive for a sexually transmitted disease.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that although risk assessments are being conducted, risk of harm often is not addressed because there is little follow up regarding service participation or effectiveness in bringing about change in the family. State-level stakeholders reported that risk of harm in foster care is addressed through training and that there is a new focus of the agency on safety in foster care. However, several stakeholders voiced concern that the agency places children with relatives who do not receive training and sometimes the placement occurs prior to conducting criminal background checks.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in 28 percent of the applicable cases reviewers determined that CD had not made diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children. A key concern was that services were not being provided to address potential areas of risk in the family.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Structured Decision Making is being used in the field to determine risk and safety during the hotline reports. It incorporates the parental history of maltreatment and information regarding any prior injuries to the child. The CPS-1 Child Abuse/Neglect Investigation/Family Assessment Summary was piloted in 2002 in selected parts of the State and was gradually expanded to statewide implementation in 2003.

With regard to maltreatment in foster care, the Statewide Assessment notes that CD employs a strength-based, formal process to review foster homes that have been the subject of a maltreatment report to the Hotline. Information in the Statewide Assessment indicates that CD recently purchased the *Confirming Safe Environments* curriculum developed by ACTION for Child Protection in order to better ensure the safety of children in kinship and foster care placements. This curriculum is being field tested by three groups in St. Louis City, Greene County, and Pettis/Cooper Counties.